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US hopes for better ties after Venezuela elections

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States is hoping to forge better ties with Venezuela once the political upheaval caused by president Hugo Chavez's death is over, but admitted yesterday it may take some time.

"All of us know that electoral campaigns may not always be the best time to break new ground on policy," said a senior State Department official, who asked not to be named.

"We will continue to desire that positive relationship... while recognizing that it may take a little while before the Venezuelan government that emerges from the elections is ready to have that conversation."

The official dismissed as "outrageous" charges made by Vice President Nicolas Maduro just hours before he announced Chavez's death in which he accused Washington of being behind a plot to destabilize the government. Caracas has also given two Air Force officers 24 hours to leave the country accusing them of involvement in the conspiracy.

Washington was "disappointed" by the charges and is

reviewing whether to take reciprocal measures against Caracas, the official said, adding "it's obviously always our right to take that action, we're not ruling anything out at this point."

But the official stressed the United States was keen to move forward, through conversations about areas of "mutual interest" such as counternarcotics, counterterrorism and economical and commercial issues including energy.

Both countries have been running their embassies in each other's capitals without an ambassador since a diplomatic spat in 2010.

Assistant Secretary for Latin America Roberta Jacobson in late 2012 reached out to Maduro "because we felt it was important to see if we could reconstruct this relationship," the official said.

Chavez's funeral has been set for Friday, and the Venezuelan leadership has invited foreign ministers to attend.

The White House is expected to announce who will represent the United States, the official said, adding "I do expect there will be a delegation."

Venezuela bids farewell to Chavez as an era ends



Handout picture released by Miraflores presidential palace press office shows the funeral cortege of late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on its way to the Military Academy in Caracas. (AFP PHOTO)

CARACAS (AFP) - The flag-draped coffin of Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez was borne through throngs of weeping supporters yesterday as a nation bade farewell to the firebrand leftist who led them for 14 years.

His mother Elena wept over his wooden casket as a band played the national anthem outside his military hospital. Presidential guards with red berets then placed his remains on top of a black hearse, surrounded by flowers.

Chavez's hand-picked successor, Vice President Nicolas Maduro, walked alongside the car through dense crowds, wearing a somber expression and a striking outfit in the color of the national flag.

Chavez' death after a two-year struggle with cancer was a blow to his adoring supporters and the alliance of left-wing Latin American powers, and plunged his oil-rich country into uncertainty as an election is organized.

His body, surrounded by soldiers, was taken to the military academy that the former paratrooper colonel once called a second home, where

he will lie in state until an official ceremony with foreign dignitaries on Friday.

People watched from their apartment windows, others climbed fences to get a better view of the hearse, many held or wore iconic images of Chavez.

The 58-year-old leader succumbed to a respiratory infection on Tuesday. A new election is due to be called within what are sure to be 30 tense days.

Maduro, who tearfully broke the news to the nation that his mentor had lost his battle with cancer, was poised to

take over as interim president and to campaign for election as Chavez's chosen successor.

The death brought thousands of Venezuelans to public squares across the nation, weeping and celebrating the life of a divisive figure whose oil-funded socialist revolution delighted the poor and infuriated the wealthy.

Hundreds of people spent the night in front of his hospital, waving Venezuelan flags and chanting "we are all Chavez!"

Continued on page 6



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New structure at Civil Aviation Department will prove successful

The government on the occasion of meeting with employees of the Department of Civil Aviation indicated that the new structure implemented has resulted in being very successful.

The new structure has opened doors for Aruba and will continue to do so. The result is that the airport will benefit greatly and so will civil aviation.

As an example of the success that Aruba has experienced, both the Minister of Labor and the Director of Civil Aviation reported that there are signs of jealousy from Holland about the excellent work being done in Aruba with respect to the registration of aircrafts.

Director, Adi Maduro reported that not only is the Department of Civil Aviation an example for the region, but also for the Dutch Kingdom. Every employee, says he, is responsible for this success.

According to the Minister,

tourism is our economic pillar and civil aviation plays a major role in its success.

In the past, according to the government, this department was always an important one, although it did not get the needed exposure and many failed to see its importance and great influence on the community and on our tourism. Slowly, however, that image is changing and people are recognizing its important role.

There are plans for expansion related to additional income sources from this department. In the past it was normally seen as a department of expenses, but this is changing and soon this department will be generating funds for the island. This is happening already, but there are so many more opportunities for generating income that we will be capitalizing on in the future, according to Minister Oduber.

Aruba YMCA honors Alex Nieuwmeyer



During a special ceremony, President Piet Janssen of the Aruba YMCA had the honor of honoring Managing Director of Divi Corporation Aruba with the title of Honorary Member of the YMCA.

Aruba YMCA has enjoyed a very fruitful relationship with Divi Aruba for the past ten years. This relationship began ever since Divi began the "one dollar per night" program amongst tourists to donate a

accumulated over ten years that was put to excellent use. Among others, that fund helped to complete the building project of the Dakota YMCA.

Nieuwmeyer said it was a pleasure for them to help in this way, and that they will continue to help the YMCA in the years to come.

The YMCAs is open daily in both the San Nicolas and Dakota centers, offering support to different groups of young people and others in our community. They have programs such as the "60-plus-



dollar per night of their hotel stay to the YMCA.

In this way, YMCA Dakota received a contribution, according to Nieuwmeyer, which

surs," vacation camps, sports for the youth, etc. As well as cake making courses for home makers.

Death of Chavez could force to Cuba speed reform

HAVANA (AFP) - Cuba could be forced to speed its economic reforms following the death of its main benefactor, Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, whose oil-backed largesse has kept the country afloat for years.

Venezuela's leftist leader gave generously to Cuba over the years, supplying Havana with billions of dollars' worth of low-cost oil from its vast reserves and paying royally for medical services.

Chavez came to Cuba's rescue at a point when the communist-run island was in deep crisis after economic support that Havana had received as a client state of the now-defunct Soviet Union dried up a decade-and-a-half ago.

Moscow had been the fi-

nancial mainstay of the island since Fidel Castro came to power in 1959.

Now, after a decade-and-a-half of support from Caracas, Havana once again finds itself economically vulnerable, political observers said.

"The death of Chavez highlights the shortcomings of the Castros' policies -- not diversifying the Cuban economy, not allowing more Cubans themselves to generate wealth and make the country genuinely independent," Paul Webster Hare, Britain's former ambassador to Havana told AFP.

Cuba has been mum about how it could be hurt if its favorable trade arrangement with Caracas were suddenly to disappear, although not every analyst believes that it will.

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Aruba's Hospital joins Cancer foundation to offer workshops



The Aruba's Dr. Horacio Oduber Hospital joins forces with the Koningin Wilhelmina Cancer Foundation to offer an important week of workshops for medical professionals, doctors, nurses, specialists and others who work with those suffering from cancer. The workshops will be totally free of charge.

The special speaker for the occasion will be Clinical Psychologist and Oncologist, Dr.

Carla Sno. Dr. Sno is an Aruban living and working for the past 40 years in Italy. Sno gives these types of workshops around the world. Her workshops here will be conducted in the Papiamentu language.

Hospital medical director, Dr. Jaime Falconi explained that the Oncology department of our hospital is going through some big changes. With the increase of cancer patients on Aruba, the hospital



wants to focus not only on the medical treatment, but also on the human side of the treatment. Falconi was very pleased with the Wilhelmina Cancer Foundation's offer to provide any assistance they can give.

According to Falconi, the primary question is...."How can we improve the service to our patients and their families so they receive the best possible service and care?" Both

Falconi and Lili Prins of the Cancer Foundation are pleased that Dr. Sno has accepted the invitation to give the workshop here on Aruba. Her expertise and knowledge will be a valuable contribution to the care and guidance of our cancer patients.

Dr. Carla Sno already had words of wisdom to share with our professionals here.

The workshops which started on Wednesday will



continue today and tomorrow in the conference room of the Hospital with, among others, information and training on how to identify and treat depression, the process to bring someone back to normal life, how to deal with regression and sessions specifically for primary care physicians and specialists. The sessions especially for doctors and specialists will include, among others, non-verbal communication, listening skills, sympathy, patient emotions, and more. To register, you can send an email to kwf@setarnet.aw. The Board of the Hospital and the Wilhelmina Cancer Foundation invite everyone who provides guidance to those suffering from cancer to attend these unique workshops.



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For the first time: “The Aruba Xtreme Event 2013” at Bushiri Beach



ORANJESTAD- It's time for something new, something extreme, time for a new and enthralling Extreme-Sports event; it's time for - “The Aruba Xtreme Event 2013”.

Foundation “2 the Max,” in collaboration with The Ministry of Public Health & Sports, presents Aruba's first international Extreme-Sports event.

This April 2nd till 7th is scheduled with an energetic program of athletes from all over the world in multiple competitions and age categories competing for titles, prizes and cash prizes. The 4 Extreme-Sports involved are: BMX Bike racing, Kite surfing, Skateboarding and Free-style Windsurfing. Hundreds of participants from around the world are expected to compete

and several world champions & pros have confirmed their appearance. Most of them will be flown in by Insel Air.

The Extreme-Sports competitions will be surrounded by activities and entertainment for young and old. There will be several shows on the water and the beach and clinics and workshops are set up for the whole family.

Plentiful food and drink will be served all day on the beach. One of our sponsors Polar will be present during the event. A Kids-Corner will keep the kids entertained and SETAR N.V. is providing a Game Corner where everyone can get their gaming on with the newest gadgets and win different prizes. Sve TV will film and broadcast the event.

Continued on page 5



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Exclusive interview with actor Ed Harris

by special Hollywood
correspondent to THE
MORNING NEWS: Noel
de Souza.

In the soon to be released film “Phantom” veteran Hollywood actor Ed Harris plays the commander of a Soviet nuclear submarine who suffers from seizures. Covert agents on-board the vessel attempt to launch a nuclear weapon at the United States navy's Pacific fleet. It is an adventure/thriller telling of one man's stands between the apocalypse and mankind's survival, based on an actual incident that took place in 1968. It co-stars David Duchovny and William Fichtner, along with a cast of some of the film industry's most enduring character actors.

Ed Harris is doing his bit to promote the film, and THE MORNING NEWS correspondent Noel de Souza met with him at the Four Season's Hotel in Beverly Hills. He reports Mr. Harris was “As usual, warm and friendly.”

NDS: Filming within the confines of a submarine must have been really claustrophobic; what was the experience like for you?

EH: Yeah, I would say that 98% of it was filmed in a Russian submarine of the same sub that inspired the story. It's in San Diego as part of a naval museum located there. So we filmed there for four weeks. Being within the confines of the sub was great because it certainly helped with the authenticity, not only the look of the film but for us the actors. The confines in which we had to deal with each other, it just worked out great.

NDS: Do you think that you have any of the attributes that would lend themselves to you being a submarine commander?

EH: Well, I grew up pla-

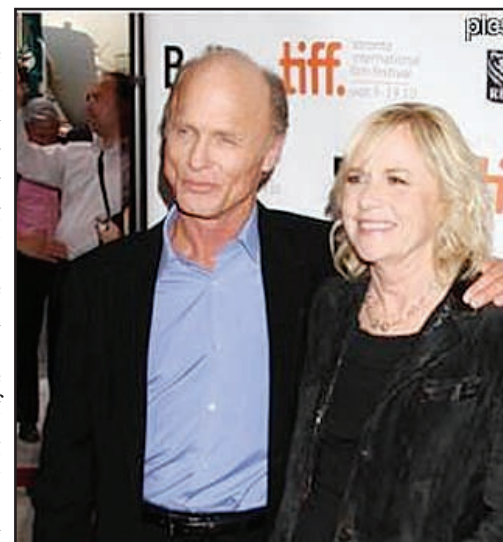
ying sports. I was the captain of the football team. I feel that in certain situations I could be a pretty good leader. I directed two films and I had a good relationship with the crew and cast in terms of being ultimately in charge of the situation. If I know what I'm dealing with I have a good deal of confidence in being able to get done what needs to get done.

NDS: Your character in the film has issues with being in the shadow of his father. Can you relate to that in any way?

EH: I never really felt in the shadow of my father, he's still alive; knock on wood. He turned 90 in October- still hanging in there. He was an entertainer, although he got an engineering degree from the University of Pennsylvania in the late 50's. He was on the Gary Moore show and the Perry Como Show (All TV shows) I grew up playing sports, that was my interest so I never felt like I was in his shadow. I think maybe part of why I became an actor might have some thing to do with the fact that I knew I didn't have to have a 9 to 5 kind of regular job, that there were other ways to survive. I love my dad dearly, he's a great guy but I never felt that I was ever in his shadow.

NDH: Looking at the volume of work that you've done, it seems to me that you have been working nonstop. Do you know how many films in which you have appeared?

EH: I really don't know.. Since I made this film last year, I actually made five films



Ed Harris with wife Amy Madigan

last year and I did a play with my wife. I usually don't work that way, back to back. I mean I had a day in-between things. They were all projects that I was interested in. It just happened that way. I don't know how many films I've done, but it's got to be some where in the sixties range.

Continued on page 5

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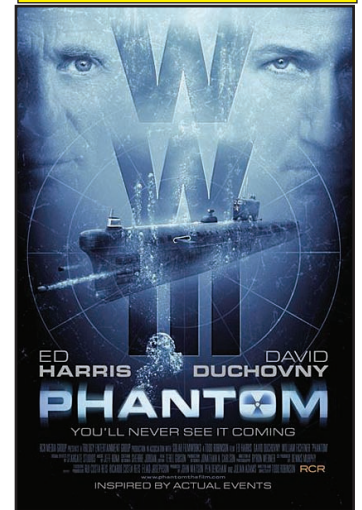
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Exclusive interview with Ed Harris



NDS: Talking about your wife, (Amy Madigan) she is such a good actress, why is she not working in films?

EH: Pardon my language, the f*****g business. I mean, she's a wonderful actress. She hasn't had a good role since Peggy Guggenheim which was 12 years ago or more and "Pollock" which I directed (and played artist Jackson Pollock) She's willing and able. We actually worked on a couple of little films together. One was called "Frontera," that was about immigration and the border. But coming back to the question why she isn't working; if you're a woman who's 60 years old and you are not Meryl Streep or Susan Sarandon, good luck. I guess I'll have to find a project for my wife which I can direct in which she is the main character; I'll either have to write it or find it. Thank you for asking, I'll tell her that you asked.

NDS: Since you have been working nonstop the last year, how do you relax? What do you do when you are not working??

EH: What I like to do when I am not working on a film is manual labor. We've got some property and I love doing what ever needs to be done on it. Whether it's digging a ditch or laying bricks or building steps or cutting down trees- that really makes me feel good.

Noel reports he would have liked to probe further into Mr. Harris' home life, but the popular actor's very busy schedule whisked him away. "Phantom" was released in U.S. theaters on March 1. Film critics have called his work in the film "faultless," and describe the tension inside the sub as "palpable."

"The Aruba Xtreme Event 2013" at Bushiri Beach

Continued from page 4

There are prizes to be won during the video/film competition by the person who makes the best event film. The film will be promoted through social media for a month. Rules and regulations can be found on the website. WIFI will be free and live-streaming on the spot will broadcast in detail every exciting moment for the world to see.

At night, I Love Muzika, in collaboration with Aruba's Nr. 1 soundman Eric Eman from Purple Entertainment Group, will bring the house down with

the help of several internationally renowned DJ's.

There is so much more to do and see during "The Aruba Xtreme Event 2013" and we will keep everyone up to date during the following next weeks," a spokesperson said.

"We invite Aruba to come take a look or to participate in the competitions and/or activities. Follow and LIKE us on Facebook to be kept informed and register quickly on our website: www.aruba-xtreme.com.

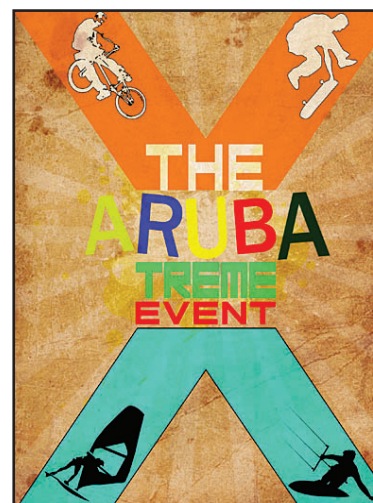
Early registrants will get a discount, so make sure you get

your name in on time.

Minister Dr. Richard Visser fully supports "The Aruba Xtreme Event 2013" and with his blessing and that of all the sponsors, collaborators and volunteers, and hopefully yours as well, this will become the event of the century.

See you there at "The Aruba Xtreme event", from April 2nd till 7th, 2013.

For more information contact: Mayra and Roelof Lageveen; M: 5949110/5930869 E: arubaxtreme@gmail.com



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Late winter snowstorm shutters US government



AFP photo shows a llama seeking shelter next to an abandoned school bus at Cox Farms in Centreville, Virginia.

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A late winter storm blanketed the eastern United States with snow yesterday, shutting down the federal government and causing aviation officials to cancel as many as 1,000 flights.

The US Office of Personnel Management said federal workers in the Washington DC area and surrounding areas got the day off from work.

In Washington, DC and the surrounding areas, virtually all of the schools were closed, as were most local government offices.

The US National Weather Service said in an advisory that the storm's heavy snow and strong winds would last into Friday, as it lumbers eastward after leaving parts of the central US digging out from under as much as two feet (60 cm) of snow. The precipitation was accompanied by high winds.

The US Weather Prediction Center in College Park Maryland gave snowfall totals of about a foot (30 centimeters) of snow in Illinois and Indiana, and nine inches (23 centimeters) in parts of Michigan and Ohio.

The slow-moving storm was expected to continue to

dump snow on the east coast through early Friday, as it crawled up the Atlantic coast to an area north of Boston, where several inches of snow are expected.

The storm will have have "a significant impact on southern New England," the National Weather Service statement said. "This will be a long duration storm," read the NWS's advisory, warning of winds that could gust to up to 50 miles (80 km) per hour and impaired visibility in some areas that could be a little as a quarter-mile (0.4 km).

Wet heavy, snow weighted down power lines and snapped tree branches leading to outages in parts of the eastern United States, and more power problems were expected as the storm grows in intensity.

Power companies said they were reinforcing their crews in anticipation of long hours spent restoring service to customers left in the dark.

In Morristown, New Jersey, the Jersey Central Power and Light, said it had marshaled all available crews and support staff "to work around-the-clock, as needed, to restore service should weather-related outages occur."

Venezuela bids farewell to Chavez...

Continued from page 1



Henrique Capriles

A banner was hung on the hospital fence, reading "Chavez lives, the battle continues!"

But not everyone in a country divided by Chavez's populist style agreed, with opposition supporters in better off neighborhoods still angry.

"Hate and division was the only thing that he spread," 28-year-old computer programmer Jose Mendoza told AFP in an eastern Caracas opposition bastion. "They want to make him a martyr. It made me laugh.

"He did a lot of social things, but he could have done much more. He also did a lot of harm because there are no institutions, there is no justice. He mistreated everyone who disagreed with his government."

The armed forces were to fire a 21-gun salute and "there will be a salvo every hour until his burial," Defense Minister Diego Molero said.

Maduro said the nation's security forces had been deployed but Foreign Minister Elias Jaua said calm reigned in Venezuela, which was rocked by a short-lived coup against Chavez in 2002.

Venezuela's closest ally, communist Cuba, declared its own mourning period for a leader who helped prop up the island's economy with cheap fuel and cash transfers, and dubbed Chavez a "true son" of revolutionary icon Fidel Cas-

tro.

But US President Barack Obama -- often a target of Chavez's anti-American scorn -- was circumspect, pledging the United States would support the "Venezuelan people" and describing Chavez's passing as a "challenging time."

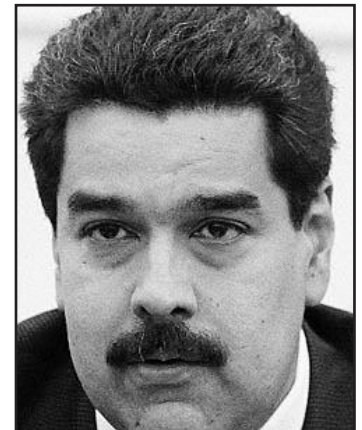
Chavez was showered with tributes from Latin American leaders and Russia, China and Iran also paid tribute to a man who had cultivated close ties with the bugbears of the West as a way of thumbing his nose at Washington.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Chavez had fallen "martyr" to a "suspect illness," while hailing his close ally for "serving the people of Venezuela and defending human and revolutionary values."

And beleaguered Syrian strongman Bashar al-Assad took time off from attempting to crush a revolt against his brutal rule to dub Chavez's death "a great loss for me personally and the Syrian people."

Chavez had checked into the hospital on February 18 for a course of chemotherapy after spending two months in Cuba, where in December he had undergone his fourth round of cancer surgery since June 2011.

A new election could offer another shot at the presidency



Nicolas Maduro

to Henrique Capriles, the opposition leader who lost to Chavez in October but insisted Tuesday that the two men were "adversaries, but never enemies."

Luis Vicente Leon, director of the polling group Datanalisis, said the government will likely want to hold elections as early as possible "to take advantage electorally of the emotion generated by the president's death."

Chavez died five months after winning re-election, overcoming public frustration over a rising murder rate, regular blackouts and soaring inflation.

He missed his swearing-in for a new six-year term on January 10, but the Supreme Court approved an indefinite delay.

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International News

EU fines Microsoft 561 mn euros on web browser choice

BRUSSELS (AFP) - The EU fined Microsoft 561 million euros (\$730 million) Wednesday for failing to provide customers with a choice of Internet browser, as promised, but Brussels ran into criticism it had failed to do its job properly by allowing the US giant to monitor its own commitments.

Almunia stressed that in 2009, Microsoft had given a cast-iron vow to offer clients a web browser choice through to 2014 after complaints about the then-dominance of its Windows Explorer product.

A Commission probe showed that during the roll-out of Windows 7, Microsoft failed to offer the choice screen for the period May 2011 to July 2012, affecting some 15 million computer buyers.

Asked later at a press conference why the Commission had not picked up on the problem at the time, Almunia said that it was Microsoft itself which was in charge of monitoring its commitments and reporting on them to the EU.

In future, such commitments would be monitored much more closely and certainly not by the companies in-

involved, said Almunia, who took up his post in 2010.

Microsoft acknowledged the failure on Wednesday, which it put down to technical problems.

From July 2012, Microsoft complied with the web choice requirement and Almunia said the company had indicated it would make up the 14 months of lost time.

The EU has had a series of disputes with Microsoft, imposing a first fine of 497 million euros on competition grounds in 2004.

In 2008, it had pay to 899 million euros in 2008, subsequently reduced to 860 million, for failing to comply with an order to share product information with rivals so that their software could work with Windows.

Under EU law, a company found to have breached commitments made to resolve competition cases can face a fine of up to 10 percent of annual sales. In 2012, Microsoft posted sales of just under \$74 billion.

The single biggest EU anti-trust fine was against computer chip-maker Intel at 1.06 billion euros in 2009.

Taliban kill 17 captured Afghan soldiers

KABUL (AFP) - Taliban militants have killed 17 captured Afghan soldiers in the far northeast in one of the deadliest single attacks on local forces in recent years, officials said on Wednesday.

The men were taken hostage in Badakhshan on Saturday while guarding a convoy. Their bodies were discovered by local people in the relatively peaceful mountainous province, which borders Tajikistan, China and Pakistan.

"The enemy have executed 17 soldiers whose bodies were found last night," provincial deputy police chief Sayed Ja-

hangir Keramat said. "Seven other soldiers were released in exchange for some Taliban prisoners."

The attack came as local forces take over responsibility for tackling the Taliban from the NATO-led military coalition.

"Last night locals found 17 bullet-riddled bodies of Afghan soldiers in Warduj district," Abdul Marouf Rasekh, spokesman for the provincial governor, told AFP, confirming several others had been released after talks led by tribal elders.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack but said the deaths had occurred during fighting rather than after the soldiers had been captured.

"The soldiers were all killed in the battlefield," Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said in a statement sent to AFP.

"A huge amount of munitions and two vehicles were also seized," he added.



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Soldier missing since 1980 'found'

MOSCOW (AFP) - A Soviet soldier from Uzbekistan who went missing in 1980 while serving in the Red Army during the war in Afghanistan has turned up living in the west of the country over three decades later.

Bakhretin Khakimov has been living in Herat province since suffering an injury there during service in September 1980, according to the veterans support organisation which found him.

Khakimov is now known as Sheikh Abdullah and works as a healer, said Alexander Lavrentyev of the Warriors-Internationalists Affairs Committee, quoted by the RIA Novosti news agency.

According to RIA Novosti there are still 264 Soviet soldiers considered to be missing in Afghanistan and the veterans group intends to work until the fate of every single one is known.

US 'cannibal cop' defends 'fantasy' horrors

NEW YORK (AFP) - The founder of an extreme fetish website used by New York's "cannibal cop" testified yesterday that online chats about women being eaten were a typical fantasy and compared the forum to Facebook.

Sergey Merenkov, the main witness called by suspended policeman Gilberto Valle's lawyers in a single day of defense arguments, told the court his site darkfetishnet.com, a favorite of the accused, was "a social network."

Valle, 28, visited the site, most of whom's users live in the United States and Europe, for discussions on horrific -- but he claims entirely fictional -- scenarios about torturing, murdering and cannibalizing women.

Prosecutors assert that Valle should be found guilty of conspiracy to kidnap women that he had talked about abducting and eating.

But Valle's defense team hopes to persuade the jury that the policeman, who faces up to life in prison if convicted on the kidnapping conspiracy charge, is guilty of nothing more than unusual sexual fantasies.

The federal jury has been shown gruesome pictures downloaded onto Valle's computers, including women apparently being burned. It was not always clear when a picture had been staged or not.

Closing arguments were scheduled for today, after which the jury will start deliberating in a case that has gripped New York tabloid media.

Cannibalism was Valle's secret obsession, resulting in him spending hours every night on the computer before his wife and mother of their newborn child discovered what he was doing and fled the house last year, then told the FBI.

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Health & Living

US warns over deadly, hard-to-treat bacteria

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A deadly strain of hard-to-treat bacteria is spreading in US health facilities, posing a particular risk to the nation's most vulnerable patients, authorities said in a report.

Health officials said the bacteria has proved stubbornly resistant to treatment with antibiotics, making some infections impossible to cure.

Up to half of all patients who get blood stream infections from the bacteria die, health officials said.

The report about the lethal bacteria -- carbapenem-resistant enterobacteriaceae (CRE) -- was issued by Vital Signs, a publication of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"CRE are nightmare bacteria. Our strongest antibiotics don't work, and patients are left with potentially untreatable infections," said CDC Director Tom Frieden.

Enterobacteriaceae are a family of more than 70 bacteria, including E. coli, that normally live in the digestive system.

Some of the bacteria have become resistant over the years to antibiotics known as

carbapenems -- often seen as the medication of last resort when treating bacteria.

Officials said the bacteria sometimes gets passed along from the hands of medical workers, creating life-threatening infections in patients whose health already is compromised, and even in otherwise healthy people.

Most at risk are people receiving significant medical care in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and nursing homes for the elderly and acutely ill.

Vital Signs reported that almost 200 hospitals and long-term acute care facilities treated at least one patient infected with these bacteria during the first half of last year.

The malady is also highly infectious: Over the past decade, the CDC has tracked one type of CRE from a single health care facility to health care facilities in at least 42 states.

Frieden urged doctors and public health workers to put in place a "detect and protect" strategy and stop the lethal infections from spreading.

Health officials said other recommendations to avoid

transmitting the bacteria include "using antibiotics more wisely" and creating dedicated wards, staff and equipment within hospitals exclusively for patients with CRE.

Teens' healthy tips (WHAT you eat affects your mood and your skin)

- Avoid foods that are not beneficial to health like chips, canned foods, cookies and other junk foods. Many processed packaged foods contain too much sugar or salt and little or no nutrition. Some junk foods are also high in calories and fat as well. Completely avoid these types of foods.

- Healthy switch. Eat food rich in Omega-3 which are beneficial for healthy hair, skin and nails. These good fats also help improve heart and brain health, making omega-3s a beneficial beauty treat. Cod liver oil and eggs are among the food loaded with omega-3. Taking omega-3 supplements is especially helpful for teens who suffer from dry hair and skin because the fats lubricate the body on the inside.

- Sleep. Most teens need eight or more hours of sleep a night to remain healthy. Lack of sleep can cause mood swings, depression and other health problems. Avoid drinking caffeine or watching TV at night. Read a book to help the mind wind down.

Hong Kong sees 17-percent rise in HIV cases

HONG KONG (AFP) - Hong Kong saw a 17-percent jump in the number of new HIV infections in 2012, driven mainly by sexual transmission, data showed Wednesday, bucking a regional trend of decline.

Health authorities said 513 new infections were recorded last year, compared to 438 in 2011, taking the total number of cumulative cases to 5,783 since 1984.

Of the 513 new cases, the Centre for Health Protection said nearly half were infected "via homosexual or bisexual exposure", followed by heterosexual contact and drug injection.

"They should use a condom for safer sex to reduce the risk of contracting HIV," Wong Kahing, a special preventive programme consultant at the centre said.

The number of people living with HIV worldwide rose from 33.5 million in 2010 to 34 million in 2011, according to UNAIDS. Asia has seen a slight decline in new infections -- from 4,700 cases in 2001 to 4,500 in 2009.

In China however, a total of 68,802 new HIV cases were reported in the first 10 months of last year, bringing the total to nearly half a million according to state media.

Daily-dose HIV prevention fails for African women

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Daily doses of drugs or vaginal gels have proven ineffective at preventing HIV infections in southern Africa, a study out Monday revealed, saying most of the women failed to use them as directed.

"Although there may be other explanations for why these products don't always work to prevent HIV, it's hard to ignore the fact that so few women in our study used them," said Jeanne Marrazzo, who reported the results from more than 5,000 women in 15 trial sites in Uganda, South Africa and Zimbabwe at a conference in Atlanta.

Blood tests detected the medication was present in fewer than a third of the study participants assigned to take an oral dose of Truvada or tenofovir antiretroviral drugs, and in less than a quarter assigned to apply the tenofovir as a gel.

And the women least likely to take the drugs as directed were unmarried women under 25 -- the women at highest risk of HIV infection.

Previous clinical trials, among other population sectors, had shown that a daily dose of Truvada or tenofovir works well to the risk of HIV infection.

But even highly effective drug treatments will fail if they aren't used, emphasized fellow researcher Zvavahera Mike Chirenje of the University of Zimbabwe in Harare.

Another researcher, Sharon Hillier, suggested that "products that are long-acting, such as the dapivirine vaginal ring, which we are evaluating in the ASPIRE study, and that women use for a month at a time, may be more suitable for this vulnerable population."

If the results of the trial were disappointing, the researchers said they underlined the importance of finding a better prevention strategy for these women.

Just under nine percent of unmarried women under age 25 were HIV positive, the study found, far higher than the less than one percent of older, married women.

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Sci-Tech

Indian women use smartphones to 'pin the creeps'



MUMBAI (AFP) - With virtual bodyguards, panic buttons and maps to pinpoint harassment blackspots, women in urban India are using their smartphones for protection after a notorious gang-rape in New Delhi.

Interest in safety apps and websites has surged since the fatal December attack, in which a 23-year-old student was set upon by a drunken gang on her way home from a cinema in the Indian capital.

After outrage and protests erupted, four businesswomen set up Safecity.in, a website for victims of harassment to channel their anger.

The site encourages them to "Pin the Creeps" by reporting incidents of harassment and abuse -- ranging from catcalling to rape -- which are added to an online map and sent to those requesting alerts.

Mumbai-based Elsa D'Silva, a founder of the site, said social media had allowed

women to speak out and warn others of dangerous areas, even if they are reluctant to give their name or make a complaint to the police.

The website has linked up with new mobile app SafeTrac, developed by tech firm Kriti Labs and downloadable for free, which has an SOS button to alert emergency contacts and lets relatives or friends track the user's journey.

It joins a host of similar apps designed to reassure women, especially those working late and travelling alone -- that is, if they can afford mobile Internet access.

The first such Indian app was FightBack, launched by non-profit trust Whypoll a year before the Delhi attack, since when it has gone free of charge and seen a flurry of downloads.

Whypoll founder Hindol Sengupta said they were now working on a "next generation" app that will include

guidance for reporting abuse.

"Women often don't know their legal rights when they go to the police station and they can be further violated there," he said.

Such developments are being encouraged. India's IT trade body NASSCOM has opened a contest to find the best app for women's safety. Separately, free app Stipator (Latin for "bodyguard") won an award for social innovation last month from NASSCOM.

A government commission, set up to prevent sex crimes after the Delhi attack, recommended the development of

mobile phone apps for sending distress signals to the police.

Even in Mumbai, considered one of India's safest cities, police launched their own ICE (In Case of Emergency) app in January and say they have seen thousands of downloads, although its practicality has been criticised.

A piece in the DNA newspaper pointed out that many women in India cannot afford a basic mobile phone, let alone the Android device required.

Technology clearly has its limits: it cannot fulfil the need for decent law enforcement, or change attitudes towards

women.

Most safety apps require GPS capabilities that standard mobile phones do not have, although some developers offer emergency texting services.

The creators of Stipator, Ratnesh Desai and three fellow Microsoft employees in Hyderabad city, are also working on a "lipstick-sized" safety device for women without phones.

Techies and activists hope that if their tools catch on, they might one day act as a deterrent to abuse.



NAPLES (AFP) : Firemen are still at work at the "City of Sciences" following a fire overnight on March 5, 2013 in a former industrial site in the Bagnoli area of Naples. A huge blaze burnt down the vast science park in the southern Italian city of Naples overnight, with officials pointing Tuesday to possible arson.

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ACROSS

1. Fireside ____
5. Common article
8. Dime, e.g.
12. Witching ____
13. Eighth mo.
14. "____ Tired" (2 wds.)
15. Helpful
17. Dryer's outlet
18. Seed vessel
19. Model Carol
20. Stains
21. "____ and Old Lace"

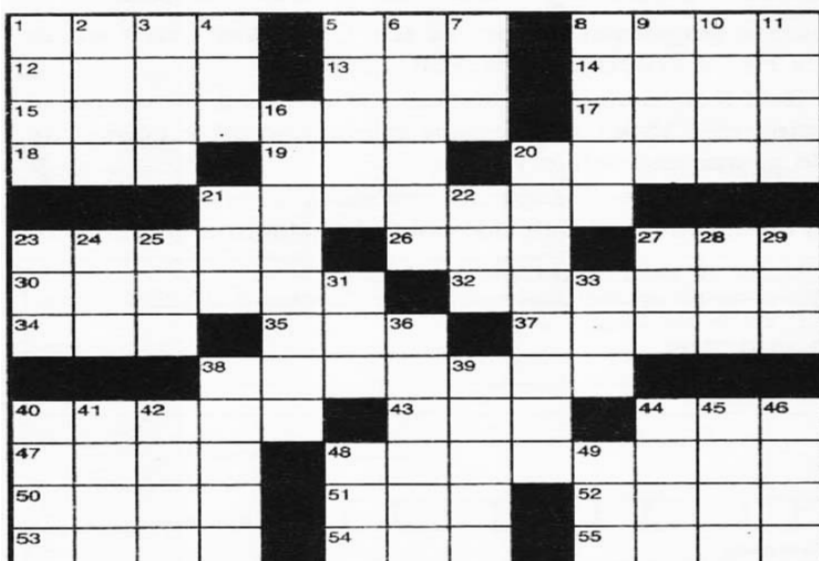
23. Change
26. Garnet's color
27. Computer co. inits.
30. Coined money
32. Sent an invoice
34. Woodsman's tool
35. Bk. after Leviticus
37. Lacks
38. Tweaked a cheek
40. Salami variety
43. Boxing results (abbr.)
44. Yr. divisions
47. Certain poems
48. Residents of Moscow
50. Senses of self

51. Letter after bee
52. Eating plan
53. End of a New Year's song title
54. Question's opposite (abbr.)
55. Juan's cheers

DOWN

1. Mince
2. Rail rider
3. New Year's song beginning
4. Angle starter
5. Dog wagers
6. Actress Kim ____
7. Hen's creation

8. Pertaining to a city
9. Prophetic sign
10. "____ It Romantic?"
11. Have-____ (those without)
16. Corsage flower
20. Neatness
21. Toiling insect
22. Omaha's state (abbr.)
23. Med. group
24. Recipe instruction
25. WSW's opp.
27. French island
28. Cot
29. Drs.
31. Pester for payment
33. Went first
36. Poet Rod
38. Sheriff's force
39. Watering devices
40. Moves
41. Nervous
42. Sign illuminator
44. Howl
45. Deep ____ bend
46. Fast jets (abbr.)
48. Nipper's company (abbr.)
49. Wedding response (2 wds.)



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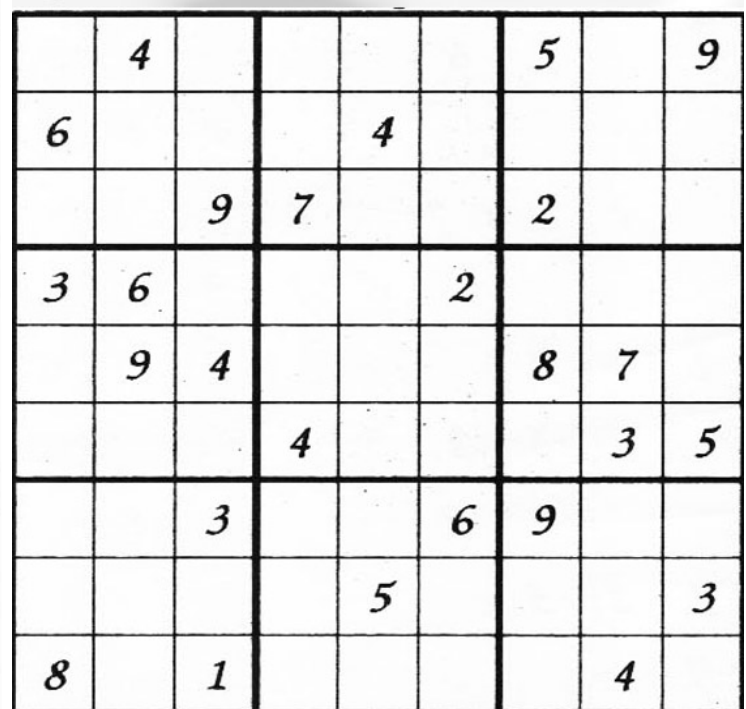
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

9	7	4	2	6	1	5	8
2	1	5	8	9	7	4	6
8	5	6	9	7	4	2	1
5	8	9	7	4	2	1	6
7	2	8	1	5	9	6	3
1	6	7	2	8	5	4	9
4	8	2	5	9	7	6	1
6	9	5	8	1	2	7	3

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



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Finance

US factory orders fall in January

WASHINGTON (AFP) - New orders for US manufactured goods fell in January, led by steep drops in aircraft and ship orders, government data released yesterday showed.

Factory orders fell 2.0 percent from December, the Commerce Department reported, slightly less than analysts expected. The department revised downward the December increase to 1.3 percent from its initial 1.8 percent estimate.

Excluding transportation equipment orders, which tend to be volatile month-over-month, factory orders rose 1.3 percent in January.

Orders for ships and boats plunged 74.3 percent, while defense aircraft orders dropped

63.8 percent.

Nondefense aircraft orders also posted a hefty decline of 34 percent.

The backlog of unfilled orders slipped 0.2 percent, after a December increase of 0.7 percent, but were up 1.5 percent from a year ago.

Total factory orders increased 1.2 percent from January 2012, showing a continuing but slow momentum in the manufacturing industry.

"Unfilled orders remain on an upward trend. Continued growth in these orders will be necessary if manufacturers are going to keep production levels steady amid fluctuating demand," Briefing.com said in research note.

World car sales should grow 3% this year

GENEVA (AFP) - Global sales of cars, buses, utility vehicles and trucks are expected to grow three percent this year, down from five percent in 2012, according to a forecast published yesterday.

The growth forecast, presented by the International Organisation of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers (OICA) at the Geneva Motor Show, is based on figures provided by the national car federations in three quarters of OICA member countries.

The world's leading car market China was meanwhile expected to see sales swell seven percent to 20.6 million vehicles.

And the world's second-largest car purchaser, the United States, was expected to post a six-percent increase to 15.7 million units, according to the forecast.

Japan however will likely see car sales slump 12 percent to 4.7 million due to a backlash following the economic stimulus program following the 2011 tsunami, which led to a spike in car sales last year.

The German market was also expected to slip two percent to 3.3 million cars sold, Britain to see sales fall one percent to 2.3 million, while those in France were forecast to shrink a full five percent to 2.2 million units.

In 2012, global vehicle sales grew five percent year-on-year to 81.7 million units, according to OICA.

Production last year followed the same curve, with carmakers pumping out 84.1 million vehicles, up five percent from 2011.

Between 2011 and 2012, all the large regions of the world saw sales rise, except South and Central America and of course crisis-hit Europe, whose share of global sales dwindled from 20 to 18 percent.

Oil falls further as US crude stocks soar

LONDON (AFP) - Global oil prices fell further yesterday after US crude stockpiles surged by more than eight times the expected amount, suggesting weak demand in the world's biggest oil consuming nation.

The market was already in negative territory on profit-taking, having earlier rebounded on uncertainty following the death of Hugo Chavez, the president of major Latin American crude producer Venezuela.

In late afternoon deals, Brent North Sea crude for delivery in April dropped 64 cents to \$110.97 per barrel.

New York's main contract, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) light sweet crude for April shed 72 cents to \$90.10 a barrel.

Prices accelerated their losses after the US government's Department of Energy announced that American crude inventories soared by 3.8 million barrels in the week ending March 1.

That was far more than market expectations for a modest gain of 500,000 barrels, according to analysts polled by Dow Jones Newswires. Crude oil stocks currently stand at their highest weekly level since June 29, 2012.

Venezuela was plunged into uncertainty meanwhile as Chavez -- who had dominated the oil-rich country for 14 years -- died after a long struggle with cancer.

"Chavez's death has opened up some geopolitical risk with uncertain transition to new ruler," added Schieldrop.

"However, he has been sick for a while so this was probably highly priced-in already.

"Crude prices (were) losing altitude already after yesterday's rise," he added.

Venezuela has the world's largest proven oil reserves, according to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

The government says Vene-




zuela produces three million barrels of oil per day, although OPEC says the figure is 2.3 million. Oil production accounts for 90 percent of the country's hard-currency revenue.

Diego Moya-Ocampos, analyst at IHS Global Insight, believes that if Chavez's chosen successor Nicolas Maduro won elections that could be held within a month, little would change in the short term.

"If Maduro is elected, we could expect some policy continuity, and the same sort of nationalist approach."

"We do not expect to see any drastic changes in Venezuela's oil operations, especially following recent corporate news from the state oil company PDVSA that Venezuela's oil industry is operating normally and no disruption is expected following the death of President Hugo Chavez," noted Sucden analyst Myrto Sokou.



Daily Exchange Rates

Current as of: 03/06/2013	Currency Code	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.71	1.73	1.75
Britain	GBP	2.62	2.67	2.73
Switzerland	CHF	188.56	189.28	190.08
Netherlands	EUR	230.06	232.16	234.49
Sweden	SEK	26.94	27.66	28.46
Denmark	DKK	30.18	30.90	31.70
Norway	NOK	30.30	31.02	31.82
Japan	JPY	188.81	190.53	192.44

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Dell reaffirms buyout plan

NEW YORK (AFP) - Dell's board of directors yesterday defended a proposed \$24.4 billion private equity buyout led by founder Michael Dell, but said it may continue looking at other offers past a March 22 deadline.

A statement issued by the special committee of the board said the plan was adopted after "a rigorous process, over a period of more than five months, to evaluate Dell's current risks, opportunities and strategic alternatives."

"As a result of that process, the special committee unanimously determined that the sale of the company would be the best alternative for stockholders, the statement said.

"We negotiated aggressively to ensure that stockholders received the best possible value and agreed to a \$13.65 per share transaction that provides value certainty at a 37 percent premium above the average price for the 90 days before rumors regarding the transaction surfaced."

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

C	H	A	T	T	H	E	C	O	I	N
H	O	U	R	A	U	G	I	M	S	O
O	B	L	I	G	I	N	G	V	E	N
P	O	D	A	L	T	T	I	N	T	S
A	M	E	N	D	A	R	S	E	N	I
A	M	E	N	D	R	E	D	I	B	M
M	I	N	T	E	D	B	I	L	L	E
A	X	E	N	U	M	N	E	E	D	S
P	I	N	C	H	E	D				
G	E	N	O	A	K	O	S	W	K	S
O	D	E	S	R	U	S	S	I	A	N
E	G	O	S	C	E	E	D	I	E	T
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Oliver Stone, Sean Penn hail 'hero' Chavez

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - US filmmaker and long-time Hugo Chavez supporter Oliver Stone hailed the late Venezuelan leader as a "great hero" on Tuesday, saying he will "live forever in history."

Actor and activist Sean Penn, another Hollywood friend to Chavez, also paid tribute saying the world's poor had lost a "champion" and America had also lost "a friend it never knew it had."

"JFK" and "Natural Born Killers" director Stone said: "I mourn a great hero to the ma-

jority of his people and those who struggle throughout the world for a place.

"Hated by the entrenched classes, Hugo Chavez will live forever in history," he added in a statement released by his publicist, adding: "My friend, rest finally in a peace long earned."

Stone has regularly praised Chavez, whom he interviewed for a 2009 documentary "South of the Border," exploring the outspoken Venezuelan leader's role in bottom-up change sweeping South America.

Penn, in a statement reacting to Chavez's death aged 58, added: "Venezuela and its revolution will endure under the proven leadership of Vice President (Nicolas) Maduro.

"Today the people of the United States lost a friend it never knew it had. And poor people around the world lost a champion. I lost a friend I was blessed to have.

"My thoughts are with the family of President Chavez and the people of Venezuela," he added

The Oscar-winning actor developed a friendship Chavez, visiting him in Venezuela on multiple occasions, and also interviewing Cuban revolutionary icon Fidel Castro. Chavez has described the actor as a "friend of just causes."

Stone and Penn were speaking after Chavez lost his battle with cancer, his death silencing the leading voice of the Latin American left and plunging his oil-rich nation into an uncertain future.

The one certainty about next pope? He'll wear Gammarelli



ROME (AFP) - Vestments for the new Pope to be elected are displayed in the window of Italian ecclesiastical tailor Gammarelli on March 4, 2013 in Rome. The tailors at Gammarelli ecclesiastical tailoring create vestments for the new pope in small, medium and large sizes so that whoever is chosen will fit right into the clothes. Six generations of Gammarelli's have had the honour of serving thousands of priests, and hundreds of Bishops and Cardinals and Pontiffs.





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Vatican urges 'reserve' as US cardinals fall silent

VATICAN CITY (AFP) - The Vatican on Wednesday urged "greater reserve" ahead of the conclave to elect a new pope, as US cardinals scrapped their daily press briefings saying that "concern was expressed about leaks".

US cardinal Timothy Dolan, the archbishop of New York, and Francis George, the archbishop of Chicago, had been due to address journalists at the Pontifical North American College in Rome.

"Concern was expressed about leaks of confidential proceedings reported in Italian newspapers," the US Conference of Catholic Bishops said.

"As a precaution, the cardinals have agreed not to do interviews," it added in a statement.

Italian media earlier on Wednesday reported there were "sparks" flying at pre-conclave meetings between US and German cardinals on one side and Italian ones on the other.

The reports said US and German prelates were keen to have longer discussions ahead of the conclave, while the Ital-

ians wanted to move to a papal election as quickly as possible.

Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi said he was not surprised by the decision, saying there was a general feeling of the need for "greater reserve" as the conclave looms and stressing that other countries did not have a similar media presence.

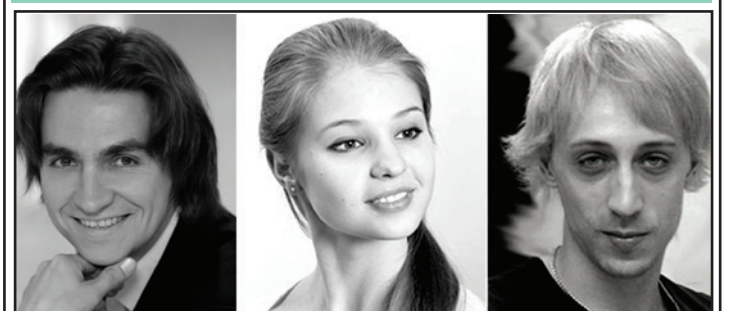
All cardinals taking part in the meetings have to swear an oath of secrecy on pain of excommunication not to discuss the papal election but US cardinals in previous briefings had spoken in more general terms about their priorities.

US cardinals had also emphasised the need for a reform of the Roman Curia, the government of the Catholic Church which has been heavily criticised in recent years for intrigue and inefficacy.

"It seems natural that the path towards the conclave leads progressively to greater reflection and discretion," Lombardi said.

"The tradition of the conclave and the path towards it is one of discretion," he said.

Dancer admits 'hate attack' on Bolshoi chief



RUSSIAN FEDERATION, - : This combo of undated pictures released by Bolshoi Theatre shows (L-R) Bolshoi Ballet artistic director, Sergei Filin, Bolshoi Ballet ballerina, Anzhelina Vorontsova, and Bolshoi Ballet soloist, Pavel Dmitrichenko. Pavel Dmitrichenko and two other detained suspects have confessed to their involvement in the acid attack on the artistic director of world famous dance company Sergei Filin, Moscow police said today. Russian media have also pointed to a link with Anzhelina Vorontsova, a young ballerina at the theatre and reportedly Dmitrichenko's girlfriend, who had been involved in conflicts with Filin over the allocation of roles.

Taj Mahal Restaurant, an authentic culinary excursion



When Bharat Shah, originally from India, but now a successful businessman in California, put on a spectacular wedding in Aruba for his daughter Lisa and her groom Kalpesh, they welcomed hundreds of friends and relatives from around the world, including the "old country."

When all the wedding guests had finally arrived in Aruba, Bharat hosted an official welcome party along the shore in Palm Beach, and he chose to have it catered by Taj Mahal restaurant, he was that impressed by their cuisine.

If you like your Indian food authentic, or are looking for a new and unique dining experience, an evening at Taj Mahal will deliver a memorable meal. A seemingly endless menu offers scores of choices for fish, chicken, lamb and vegetarian dishes that are "the real deal," discover that Indian food goes way beyond curry!

A taste-testing crew from THE MORNING NEWS chose a selection of their singular starters and two main courses with saffron rice, served family style, which provided a fine example of the versatility of their chef.

Taj Mahal's Tai Choice is a great way to start the meal and be initiated into the joys of Indian cuisine, offering a diverse selection of traditional favorites. It contains hearty portions of Pakoras, crispy vegetarian fritters, Aloo Tikki, potato cutlets, Chicken Tikka, tender chicken breast pieces seasoned just right, and shaped and seasoned ground lamb, charmingly dubbed "Sheik Kebabs." All is served on a bed of sliced onions and brought to your table on a sizzling platter, and you will want to dish those sautéed onions on to one of their tasty Indian breads called Naan, leaving behind not a single crumb. Main dishes are accompanied by a choice of rice, mixed vegetables rich with garlic, or Naan, plain, buttered, onion or garlic, and you will want to order an extra basket or two of this tasty delight, on

which you can spoon your main course, as well. Poori is crispy fried naan, and most definitely worth the extra two dollars to sample with your meal.

Our group also added an appetizer of crunchy Samosas, the Indian form of a potato knish, served with either cilantro or sweet and sour sauce. A platter of their Jhinga, large, crispy-fried shrimp in a delicate batter is ample enough to serve as a main course, though featured on their appetizer menu.

As we mentioned, main courses are served family style, in beautiful little pots that sit upon a candle to keep them warm. Our group sampled the "Mutton Saagwala," also known as "Lamb Shag" which is cooked in a thick sauce of yogurt and spinach, and the "Fish Hara Masala," moist, tender chunks of fish in a rich sauce featuring cilantro as the main flavoring. This is offered in mild, medium and very spicy, we found the medium quite spicy enough for us; it left a tingle on the tongue.

The family style service allows everyone at the table to sample a bit of this and that, and we heartily recommend you do, to truly appreciate this authentic bit of India in Aruba. Open for lunch and dinner, Taj Mahal sports a cozy and intimate air-conditioned dining room and a small outdoor terrace for those that enjoy dining al fresco. They have an exotic dessert menu to match, but our group was too stuffed to partake; there was even enough left to box up and provide a lunch next day for the lucky first person to get to it!

Located behind the Royal Plaza Mall, across from Aruba's Numismatic Museum, Taj Mahal offers a dining experience that is truly out of the ordinary; they feature an excellent and tasty selection for vegetarians too. If you are a fan of Indian food, or have been toying with trying it, Taj Mahal is the place for a very affordable dining experience and the real deal! Call 588-4494 for reservations.

Have your bikini your way at Banana Moon



A store that finally understands the uniqueness of every woman's body has recently opened its doors on the Havenstraat in Oranjestad, just behind the Royal Plaza Mall.

Banana Moon is a well-known brand of swim and beach wear, manufactured in Monaco, so quality is insured. Their unique claim to fame is that bikinis and tankinis are sold as separates, so stylish women can mix and match to produce the combination of their choice, as well as being assured a perfect fit, both top and bottom. Prices are very reasonable for designer swimwear.

Owner Selma was inspired to seek out a brand



that answered her own frustrations at finding a proper fitting two piece swimsuit, and discovered the stylish and well-made product. The shop is quiet new, and they report they are expecting a shipment of the most recent collection at any moment.

Presently, however, their walls are lined with an adorable selection, in a rainbow of colors to suit any taste. Shelly from Ohio, reports she had been all over the island looking for just such a store, and walked out with a big smile and two new bikinis. She has the good fortune to have a fantastic figure, but the misfortune of always finding bikini tops never quite fit when the bottom was just



A complete selection of Arubianas sandals

right. This is not an uncommon complaint. "We have nothing like this back where I live," she reports, "Banana Moon is a real find. I will certainly be back for more bathing suits next year."

The shop also features a complete inventory of the exclusive, but moderately priced "Arubiana" sandals, which have a diverse selection that will produce at least one pair to perfectly color coordinate to your swim selection. Banana Moon also produces very attractive lines of beach tunics and wraparounds. Smart beach bags and adorable hats will complete the ensemble, for a perfectly fitting fashion statement on Aruba's fine white sands.



A nice selection of beach covers

Banana Moon is open daily, Monday through Saturday, nonstop from 9:00 AM until 6:00 PM. Visit them for that dream bikini that fits perfectly in all places!

Sport

Football: Messi still confident of Milan miracle

MADRID (AFP) - World Player of the Year Lionel Messi still believes Barcelona can overcome a 2-0 deficit against AC Milan in the Champions League next week despite their recent poor form.

The Catalans have lost three of their last four games, including two defeats to Real Madrid in the past week, but Messi is confident they can regain their best form when they need it most against the Italians on Tuesday.

"It is obvious that we have to do a little more. Lately we have come from a run of defeats and we are aware of what we need to do to change that," he told reporters at a promotional event on Wednesday.

"There is a key game coming up for us to react and make this change.

"To come back is what we all want. We know it will be very difficult, but we believe it's possible. If they can do it there, then we can do it here.

"We know that if they score a goal it will be more difficult and that Milan have

very good players, but we will have our chances."

Messi also acknowledged that the ongoing absence of coach Tito Vilanova as he undergoes cancer treatment in New York has impacted on the squad, but refused to blame the loss of Vilanova as a reason for their recent dip in form.

"It has affected us a lot and I think it has taken its toll when it comes to preparing for each competition, but we have a strong dressing room and I don't think we can put the blame on this situation."

The Argentina captain also reflected on Madrid's 2-1 win against Manchester United at Old Trafford on Tuesday night and admits that Los Blancos are now a serious candidate to win the Champions League.

"Madrid are demonstrating that they are very strong. They knocked us out of the Cup and they are now in the quarters of the Champions League.

"They are a candidate to win the Champions League, just as United were."

Cycling: American Talansky takes stage and yellow jersey

FRANCE (AFP) - American rider Andrew Talansky of the Garmin team won the third stage of the Paris-Nice on Wednesday and took the overall lead after a six-man breakaway held off the peloton following 170.5km between Chatel-Guyon and Brioude.

The 24-year-old Miami native edged out escape partners Davide Malacarne of Italy and Spaniard Gorka Izagirre on a wet afternoon as he picked up his biggest career win and also took the overall lead.

Lopez of Spain, Australia's Richie Porte and French rider Romain Bardet also came home with the same time as Talansky while seventh-placed Andriy Grivko of the Ukraine is now second overall at 3secs.

Malacarne moves third overall on the same time with Sylvain Chavanel of France a further second adrift.

Italy's Elia Viviani, who began the stage in the leader's yellow jersey, was well distanced and lost nearly three minutes on a route unsuited to his sprinting talents.

Former top Dutch cyclist Boogerd admits to doping

THE HAGUE (AFP) - Former top Dutch cyclist Michael Boogerd has admitted doping from 1997 to the end of his career in 2007 in an interview to be aired on Wednesday.

The 40-year-old, who won two stages of the Tour de France in 1996 and 2002, admitted using the banned blood-booster erythropoietin (EPO), cortisone, as well as receiving blood transfusions.

He is the eighth cyclist from

the former Rabobank team to admit doping, state broadcaster NOS said ahead of the Boogerd interview being broadcast on Wednesday evening.

"It was for periods, mostly during training, in preparation for competitions. I also rode the Tour de France often enough clean," Boogerd told NOS.

He declined to go into detail over a possible doping net-

work, adding: "I speak for myself and not for others."

Danish cyclist and fellow Rabobank rider Michael Rasmussen, who quit the 2007 Tour de France when he was wearing the race leader's yellow jersey, admitted in January that he had used banned drugs between 1998 and 2010.

Rasmussen, who won four individual stages on the Tour de France, said he was ready to accept any ban he risked by coming clean, a decision he said had left him a "relieved man".

Rasmussen was thrown off the 2007 Tour de France by his then-team Rabobank while wearing the yellow jersey for lying about his whereabouts the previous month when he was being sought for doping tests.

Rabobank, which had sponsored a professional cycling team for 17 years, announced in October that it would sever its ties with the team, claiming the sport had been irrevocably damaged by a succession of doping cases, notably the devastating Lance Armstrong affair.

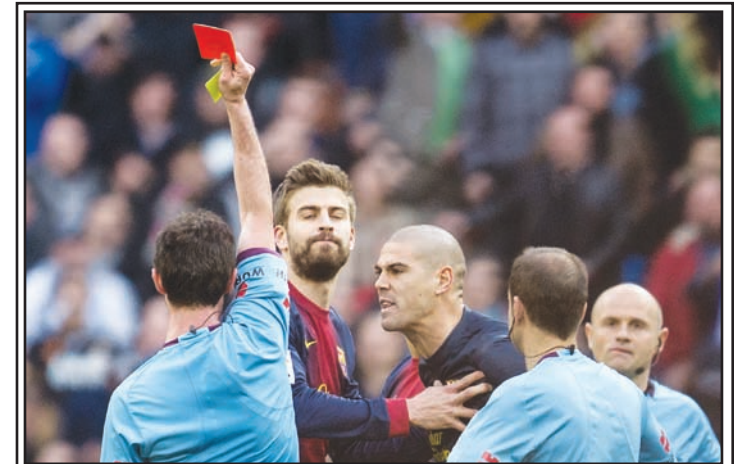


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MADRID (AFP) - Barcelona goalkeeper Victor Valdes (C) has been suspended for four games after being sent-off for demonstrating with referee Miguel Perez Lasa after his side's 2-1 league defeat against Real Madrid on Saturday. Valdes rushed from his goal after the final whistle to confront Perez Lasa after he had not awarded a penalty to the Catalans when Sergio Ramos appeared to have tripped Adriano in stoppage time. The Spanish international was given a yellow card by the referee for his outburst but continued to argue which pushed the referee into showing a straight red. The official later stated in his post-match report the Valdes repeatedly shouted 'you have no shame.'



GUAYAQUIL (AFP) - : Ecuadorean Emelec's Pablo Zaballos (R) vies for the ball with Nicolas Ortiz of Chilean Iquique during their Copa Libertadores football match at Capwell stadium in Guayaquil, yesterday. Emelec of Ecuador have six from four matches after beating Deportes Iquique of Chile 2-1 at home.

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Golf: Apologetic McIlroy vows not to repeat walkoff blunder

MIAMI (AFP) - World No. 1 Rory McIlroy apologized Wednesday for walking off the course in the middle of his second round at last week's PGA Honda Classic, saying he learned from the error and will not do it again.

On the eve of playing his first round at the \$8.75 million World Golf Championships Cadillac Championship at Doral alongside World No. 2 Tiger Woods and England's Luke Donald, McIlroy said he made a big blunder by leaving early.

"I realized pretty quickly that it wasn't the right thing to do," McIlroy said. "No matter how bad I was playing I should have stayed out there."



Starting on the back nine in his second round last week, McIlroy had two bogeys, a double bogey and a triple bogey before hitting his tee shot at the 18th into the water and walking off the course.

"I wasn't in a good place with my golf game. My head was all over the place," said McIlroy, who blamed the walkoff later on a sore wisdom tooth that he said did hurt but was no excuse.

"It was a mistake. I'm 23. I'm still learning." I have learned from it and it won't happen again."

The Northern Ireland prodigy said he felt the Honda Classic deserved a return visit.

McIlroy said that he has received many supportive comments since the incident and

hopes it will help him as he tries to return his swing to the formidable form that brought him the 2011 US Open and 2012 PGA Championship titles.

McIlroy also dismissed the idea that his woes came because he and girlfriend Caroline Wozniacki, the former women's tennis World No. 1 from Denmark who lost a first-round match a week ago at the Malaysian Open, were breaking up.

Despite having only 4 1/2 competitive rounds entering this week after missing the cut at Abu Dhabi and going out in the first round of the WGC Match Play ahead of his Honda pullout, McIlroy said he is unlikely to add an event before the Masters in a month.

NBA: Westbrook paces Thunder in win over Lakers



Kevin Durant #35 of the Oklahoma City Thunder goes up for a rebound against the Los Angeles Lakers

OKLAHOMA CITY (AFP) - Russell Westbrook scored 37 points, leading six Oklahoma City players in double figures on Tuesday in a 122-105 NBA victory over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Westbrook added 10 rebounds and Kevin Durant scored 26 points and grabbed nine rebounds for the Thunder, whose two turnovers equalled an NBA record for fewest in a game held by the 2006 Milwaukee Bucks and 2009 Cleveland Cavaliers.

Kobe Bryant scored 30 points for the Lakers, but was hampered by a right elbow injury suffered in the first quarter.

Steve Nash equalled his season-best with 20 points, but it wasn't enough to stop the Lakers from again falling below .500.

The Lakers, trying to get themselves in playoff position in the Western Conference, had taken their record to 30-30 with a victory over Atlanta on Sunday.

But they got off to a slow start against the Thunder, who raced to a 7-0 lead, held a 37-28 edge after the first quarter and never trailed.

Durant was key to the Thunder's red-hot start, scoring 20 of his 26 points in the first half.

"Obviously our slow start didn't help any," said Lakers coach Mike D'Antoni, who said his team was also hurt by 16 turnovers along with misses from the field and foul line.

"We battled through some injuries, battled through some foul trouble," D'Antoni said, noting that Dwight Howard's sore shoulder was aggravated early. "We had to play a little bit better to beat a good team."

Despite their deficiencies, the Lakers managed to close the deficit to five points in the fourth quarter, as Nash's three-pointer with 6:14 to play made it 105-110.

But the Lakers were unable to score again. Oklahoma City scored the last 12 points of the contest, a run that included a three-pointer from Serge Ibaka and a two-handed dunk by Westbrook.

The Lakers had little time to regroup before a game in New Orleans on Wednesday.

D'Antoni said the task facing his team was simple: "They've got to play like it's a playoff game."

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TOKYO, (AFP) : An employee of Ginza Tanaka poses beside the golden replica of football star Lionel Messi of Argentina's left foot during its press preview in Tokyo on March 6, 2013. Priced at about 5.25 million USD, the 25-kilogram golden foot was created by Tokyo-based jewelry retailer, Ginza Tanaka, to commemorate Messi's record-breaking Ballon d'Or for four consecutive years and the world-record 91 goals he scored a calendar year.



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Baseball: Cuba record first WBC win over champs Japan



Cuba's Alfredo Despaigne



Japan's starting pitcher Kenji Otonari

FUKUOKA (AFP) - Cuba saw off a ninth-inning fight-back by two-time defending champions Japan to win 6-3 and stay unbeaten heading into the World Baseball Classic's second round on Wednesday.

In a repeat of the tournament's first final in 2006, Alfredo Despaigne fired a three-run homer for a 6-0 lead and it proved critical as Japan clawed back to 6-3 before finally succumbing to their first defeat to Cuba in the global event.

With Cuba and Japan already through from Pool A, the game's main significance was to provide pointers for round two, and both teams will claim to have gained a psychological boost as the round-robin phase concluded in Fukuoka.

Cuba will play Pool B runners-up the Netherlands when the second round gets underway in Tokyo on Friday, while

Japan will take on fellow co-hosts Taiwan. The top two teams will advance to the final round later this month in San Francisco.

After the first six batters were shut out by Japanese starter Kenji Otonari in the first two innings, Cuba took a 1-0 lead when Yasmany Tomas hit a solo home run in the bottom of the third inning.

In the fourth inning, Jose Fernandez hit a single and then slugger Frederich Cepeda unleashed a double to get him home and enlarge the lead to 2-0, before ace pitcher Masahiro Tanaka struck out the next three batters.

The Japanese, roared on by a partisan home crowd, had their chances when they took second base three times in the second, third and fourth innings, but they were never able to cash in.

Japan missed another chance in the sixth inning with the first and third bases loaded at one down, only to see Atsunori Inaba ground out for a double play.

Jose Abreu hit a sizzling single to welcome Fernandez from the third and make it 3-0

in the sixth inning, before Despaigne's home run for 6-0 in the eighth.

Japan finally scored in the ninth inning when Hisayoshi Chono hit a single with three bases occupied. Takashi Toritani then hit a sacrifice fly for 2-6, and Hirokazu Ibata hit a single to trail

3-6.

But Ryoji Aikawa swung out with two runners still on the first and second bases as the miracle comeback petered out.

It was Cuba's first win over Japan in four games in the tournament, including their 6-10 defeat in the inaugural final in 2006.

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